Islamic State View and Administration of Jerusalem after the Muslims Conquest of the City

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Abstract: This study examine the Islamic State view and administration of Jerusalem after the first conquest and the interest that the caliph 'Umar Ibn al-KhattĀb showed in the city. It also discusses the modern researchers claim that the Muslims, in particular the caliph 'Umar did not show any special interest in Jerusalem. This study refutes that claim by presenting arguments based on historical evidences that Jerusalem is central to the Muslims throughout the history.

Key words: Muslim conquest · Bayt al-Maqdis · Administration of Jerusalem · Al-Aqsa · Umar ibn al-Khattab

INTRODUCTION

The problem of studying the administration of Jerusalem after the first Islamic conquest lies in the fact that the Islamic sources give very little information in this regard. This is not only apply to Jerusalem, but also about Palestine as one of the administrative regions in Syria. It seems that Palestine administration is the main point of argument among modern researchers with regard to the administration of Jerusalem after the first Islamic conquest. The orientalists and the Israelis among them and some Arab researchers, argue that Jerusalem did not receive any special attention from the Muslims. They based their argument on Jerusalem not being the administrative capital of Palestine after the conquest. This can be found in the work of E. Sivan, Asaf, M. Gil, D. Goitein, F. Donner and others and to a lesser extent in the writings of 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Dūrī, 'IlīĀs ShūfĀnī and others. However, Khalīl 'AthĀmina in his study *Filstīn fī Khamsat Qurūn, Min al-fatth. al-IslĀmī h. atta al-Ghazū al-Firanjī (634–1099)* attempted to prove that Jerusalem was in fact the administrative capital of Palestine after the conquest. This is a clear attempt by a Palestinian researcher to refute the claims made by the Israelis in the continuing conflict over the city. Therefore, the debate on this issue was restricted to whether or not Jerusalem was the administrative capital of Palestine.

In his study of the Muslims' organisation and the administration of Jerusalem as well as the interest they have shown in the region, the researcher will attempt to gather as many early historical accounts as possible. These will be discussed and analysed in order to reveal how the Muslims implemented their views on Jerusalem. Through the discussion of the arguments of modern researchers and the Islamic sources and accounts, the researcher will be in a position to know whether or not the Muslims have shown special interest in it.

First Administrative: The researcher argues that Caliph 'Umar Ibn al-KhattĀb paid special attention to Jerusalem and gave it a distinctive status. This is contrary to what D. Donner claims when he argues the point of 'Umar's visit to Syria and his arrival in Jeruslem. He claims that "in any case it makes it hard to say that 'Umar should have shown any interest in Jerusalem" [1].

There is no doubt that this claim contradicts what has been mentioned by the Islamic sources in this regard. We have previously argued that the main reason for 'Umar Ibn al-KhattĀb arrival in Jerusalem was to reinforce the Muslims who were besieging it. During the same visit, 'Umar appointed a special military and administrative governor for Jerusalem. This is what he did with the other cities in Syria, except in the case of al-Ramla, for which he also appointed a military governor for an interim period. The reasons for appointing a military governor for al-Ramla were quite different from the reasons behind appointing a governor for Jerusalem. 'Umar cancelled the latter appointment shortly after these reasons were no longer in effect, as we shall see later. With regard to 'Umar's appointment of a special ruler for Jerusalem when

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he arrived there, Sayf Ibn'Umar (d. 180 A.H/ 796 A.D), Khalid Ibn Mi'dan (d. 103 or108 AH/ 721 or 726 A.D) and 'Ubada Ibn Nusayy (d. 118 A.H/ 736 A.D) mentioned that: "He then sent them [an army] and divided Palestine between two men, he put 'Alqamah b. Hakīm in charge of one half and stationed him in al-Ramlah and he put 'Alqamah b. Mujazziz in charge of the other half and stationed him in Aelia. Each of them stayed in his province with the soldiers who were with him" [2].

Al-Tabarī related the same account from SĀlim Ibn 'Abdullah who mentioned that 'Umar : "According to SĀlim ('Umar) appointed 'Alqamah b. Mujazziz governor of Aelia and appointed 'Alqamah b. Hakim governor of al-Ramlah. He the solders who were with 'Amr (Ibn al-' Ās.) at their desposal. He orderd 'Amr and Shurahbīl to join him in al-JĀbiyah. When they reached al-JĀbiyah they found 'Umar riding. They kissed his knee and 'Umar embraced them, holding them to his chest"[2].

In addition to 'Umar's appointment of 'Alqama Ibn Mujziz as a military and administrative governor of Jerusalem, there are other sources which indicate that 'Umar appointed another person with 'Alqama, whose name was SalĀma Ibn Qayys. ar as an *ImĀm* (leader of prayer) in Jerusalem [3-6].

The Islamic sources also mentioned the names of other people who were appointed governors of Jerusalem during the era of 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb or shortly after that, i.e. during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Among these was 'Ubāda Ibn al-S. Āmit (d. 34 A.H), whose tomb still today in Jerusalem. Abī Zir'a al-Dimashqī, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr and Ibn Hajar al-'Asqālanī mentioned that 'Ubāda was appointed as a judge and teacher in Palestine and he lived in Jerusalem [7-9]. Al-Maqdisī, in *Muthīr* Al-GharĀm, Ibn Man z. ūr in *LisĀn Al-Arab*, Mujīr al-Dīn al- H. anbalī in *Al-Uns Al-Jalīl bi TĀrīkh Al-Quds wal-Khalīl*, mentioned that 'UbĀda was appointed governor or judge [6,10] in Palestine. It is noticed that al-Dhahabī narrated that he was the first Muslim judge in Jerusalem [9].

Second Administrative: What further illustrates and confirms the continuous interest of 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb in Jerusalem was his second visit to al-Jābiya and Jerusalem after the 'Imwās plague in 18 A.H. In his new administrative structure of Syria 'Umar cancelled the positions of the governors of Palestine and al-Ramla. He appointed Yazīd Ibn Abī SufyĀn as governor of Palestine and the Mediterranean Coast [11] to serve under Abī 'Ubayda who was appointed as the general governor of Syria [12-14] 'Umar ordered Yazīd to fight the people of

QisĀrīa [11] during his first visit to Syria and later appointed Yazīd as the general governor of Syria after the death of Abû 'Ubayda [9,12,13,14].

The cancellation of the two posts of the governors of Palestine and al-Ramla, the appointment of Mu'Āwiyya Ibn Abī Sufyān as governor (*Emīr* or *Walī*) of all Syria [12-14] and keeping 'Alqama Ibn Mujziz in his post as governor of Jerusalem, where he remained until his death in 20 A.H/ 640 A.D [3,5], are all facts which confirm that 'Umar continued his great interest in Jerusalem. This fact is also confirmed by the appointment of 'Abd Al-Rahmān Ibn 'Alqama Ibn Mujziz as governor of Jerusalem in place of his father, as both Ibn Sa'd and al- T. abarī mention [14].

It appears that the temporary appointment by 'Umar, of Yazīd Ibn Abī SufyĀn as governor of Palestine and 'Alqama Ibn H akīm as governor of al-Ramla, was for military reasons dictated by the situation in the region at that time. The stationing of Alqama Ibn H akīm with soldiers at al-Ramla, which is close to the Mediterranean coast, can be understood in the context that the coast was still under attack from the Byzantine military fleet and this continued over a long period of time. The Islamic sources also indicate that the Muslims continued to pay attention to fortifying the Mediterranean Coast area and stationing military garrisons there from the first stages of the Islamic conquests and for a long time after 'Umar's era [15]. Furthermore, al-Ramla and adjoining regions were used as a centre for the concentration of Islamic forces which later advanced to conquer Egypt under the leadership of 'Amr Ibn al-'ās. [11,15]. The receding administrative importance of al-Ramla in favour of al-Ludda shortly after the Islamic conquest and the change in the situation afterwards required the cancellation of all the posts there. However, 'Umar preserved these posts, i.e. the governor, the judge and the leader of prayer (*ImĀm*) in Jerusalem. These posts only existed in the centres where the governors resided as in the case of al-Kûfa and al-Ba s. ra in 'Iraq for instance. In the case of Jerusalem, which was not the capital of Syria or even Palestine, the existence of these posts can only be interpreted in the context of the special interest 'Umar had in Jerusalem.

What further supports this deduction is what is understood from many accounts with regard to the appointment of the governor of Jerusalem and its judge who may have conducted the judiciary function in all Palestine and not just Jerusalem. The leader of prayer (*ImĀm*) was under the direct authority of 'Umar in Madīna and outside the authority of the governor of Syria, Mu'Āwiyya Ibn Abī SufyĀn, at the time. This was a

unique position during that period. At that time, the governor used to reside in the capital city, where the main central mosque and government headquarters were located. From there he used to deal with the appointments and dismissals of the administrative governors in the respective regions, as well as other matters [15].

However, in the case of Jerusalem, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, Ibn Manz. ûr, Ibn Qudāma al-Maqdsī in *al-Isti'bsār fī Nasab al- S. a h. Āba min al-An s. Ār* and Ibn al-Athīr in *Usd al-QhĀba fi Ma'rifat al- S. a h. Āba* mentioned that there was a conflict between the governor of Syria, Mu'Āwiyya and the judge and teacher in Jerusalem, 'UbĀda Ibn al- S. Āmit. The latter headed for 'Umar in Madīna in a state of anger against the former. It appears that 'Umar reinstated 'Ubāda in his position as judge and teacher and ordered him to go back to Jerusalem, reaffirming that he was not under the authority of Mu'Āwiyya [5,8,10,16]. This clearly indicates that the issue of appointing 'UbĀda as judge and teacher in Jerusalem did not fall under the authority of Mu'āwiyya as governor of the region. Otherwise Mu'āwiyya could have taken the initiative to fire 'Ubāda and replace him with another person. Furthermore, at that time it was well known that the governors, judges and leaders of prayer (*ImĀm*) were only appointed in the major and important administrative centres which included the central mosque and the governor's residency. In most cases, the governor used to lead the prayer himself [17] Although Jerusalem was not a capital city or an administrative centre, it enjoyed a special status comparable to the status of the capital cities and administrative centres.

In addition, the Islamic sources mentioned the names of other people who were appointed in the position of governor and other positions in Jerusalem. Mujīr al-Dīn mentioned the name of someone called 'Ubayd who was appointed to such positions [4,6]. Ibn H. azm in *Jamharat AnsĀb al-'Arab* mentioned that 'Umayyr Ibn Sa'd al-Azdī took charge of posts in Jerusalem. 18 Furthermore, Al-Maqdisī Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn IbrĀhīm Ibn Hilal in *Muthīr al-QharĀm* and Mujīr al-Dīn al- H. anbalī in *al-Uns al-Jalīl* mentioned that the companion of the Prophet, Tamīm Ibn Aws al-DĀrī [14], took charge of posts in Jerusalem [4,6]. Other sources indicated that Mu'Āwiyya appointed SalĀma Ibn Qaysar as governor of Jerusalem and appointed 'Amr Ibn Sa'īd al-An s. Ārī to be in charge of some other posts in Palestine and Jerusalem [12]. However, these sources did not specify whether Mu'Āwiyya made these appointments while he was governor of Syria during the era of 'Uthm Ān Ibn 'AffĀn or after he became Caliph himself in 41 A.H/ 661 A.D.

'Umar had shown great interest in Jerusalem since its first Islamic conquest. He gave it special status and preference over other areas in Syria. This great interest is continued after 'Umar. The third rightly Guided caliph 'Uthmān Ibn 'Aaffān who ruled between 24-36 A.H/ 644-656 A.D set aside the SilwĀn area for the poor of Bayt al-Maqdis. In addition, many historical accounts and archaeological discoveries in the walled city confirm this interest. For instance, one of these archaeological operations, which was undertaken by Israeli scholars after the occupation of the eastern part of Jerusalem, revealed a magnificent Umayyad palace and a market beside the south and south-eastern wall of *al-AqsĀ* Mosque [19,20]. There is no doubt that this palace represents the headquarters (*DĀr al-ImĀra*) of the governor and the residence of the judge and leader of prayer (*ImĀm*). The location of that palace in the direction of the *qibla* is in agreement with general Islamic architecture after the conquest, where the leader of prayer (*ImĀm*) can reach the pulpit directly in front of the praying Muslims without the need to pass through them [15].

This palace, (*Dār al-Imāra*) which was more likely to have been built since the era of 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb when he appointed 'UbĀda Ibn al- S. Āmit governor, judge, teacher and leader of prayer (*ImĀm*) in Jerusalem, was either expanded or had been demolished and rebuilt during the Umayyad reign either for the purpose of expansion or because of the earthquake which hit the area in the year 39 A.H/ 659 A.D. 21

What leads us to this result is the appointment by 'Umar of a governor, judge and teacher (*ImĀm*) in Jerusalem who needed to reside in such a place so that they could easily shoulder the responsibilities assigned by their posts. Furthermore, it was known that Mu'Āwiyya visited Jerusalem quite often and stayed there for long periods. His conflict with 'UbĀda Ibn al- S. Āmit, which we have previously mentioned, indicates some of this. Ibn Sa'd and other narrators mentioned that the famous pact between Mu'āwiyya and 'Amr Ibn al-'As. after the assassination of Caliph 'Uthm ān Ibn'AffĀn was concluded in Jerusalem. That pact commences as follows : "In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. This is what Mu'āwiyya Ibn Abī SufyĀn and 'Amr Ibn al-'As. have pledged to one another in Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem) after the assassination of 'Uthm ān Ibn'Affān ..."[14].

Moreover, Mu'āwiyya, took allegiance as caliph in Jerusalem [10] after the arbitration process between him and 'Alī Ibn Abī T. Ālib had failed following the battle of S. iffīn [5,13,15,22-25]. This became the practice of a

number of the Umayyad caliphs, i.e. they took allegiance as caliphs in Jerusalem [9,***]. Indeed, the attempt by the Kharijites (al-khwĀrij) to assassinate Mu'āwiyya took place in Jerusalem, as was mentioned by Ibn 'Abd al- H. akam [***]. Therefore, there is enough evidence to suggest that the palace, which was discovered in Jerusalem, was built well before Mu'Āwiyya became caliph. Mu'Āwiyya used to spend long periods in the area after his appointment as governor of Syria. The plot to assassinate him was hatched in Makk [14,27] and the person who was supposed to have carried it out headed straight to Jerusalem because he knew that Mu'Āwiyya resided there.

The special attention paid to Jerusalem is further confirmed by the discovery of coins, which bear the names Aelia and 'Mu'Āwiyya' and go back to 41 A.H/ 661 A.D [20]; in other words, a very long time before the process of Islamization of the coins which was undertaken by caliph 'Abd al-Malik who ruled between 66 -86 A.H/ 686-705 A.D.

In this context, some Syriac sources claim that Mu'Āwiyya Ibn Abī SufyĀn who took his pledge of allegiance (Bay'a) as caliph in Bayt al-Maqdis in the year 41 A.H/ 661 A.D prayed on this occasion at Golgotha, Gethsemane and the Tomb of Marīa. However, some researchers rejected this claim, giving as reasons that this was were politics repressing the state of mind of the time and that Islam inheriting monotheistic religions [20].

Modern Researchers: Special attention which was paid to Jerusalem can clearly be seen through the appointment of a governor, a judge and an imam as well as the establishment of a government palace. However, the issue of Jerusalem not being the administrative capital of Palestine represented a political point view on which a number of modern researchers depended in their attempts to minimise the interest of the Muslims in Jerusalem. Contrary to this, the other side, which opposed these opinions attempted to confirm and prove that Jerusalem was the administrative capital of Palestine. The researcher argues that both sides lacked objectivity in this respect.

The Isra'ili orientalist, E. Sivan, claimed that Jerusalem had no significance in the early Islamic period and that it had not been the capital of Palestine at that stage [18,28] Another orientalist, Asaf, followed the same claim and stated that Jerusalem was not the capital of Palestine, either during the Byzantine era or during the Islamic era. Furthermore, he claims that Jerusalem had not even reached the status of Qa s. aba for the area around it [17,29]. As far as Gil is concerned, he stated that

Palestine during the Byzantine era was divided into three parts: Palestine prima, Palestine second and Palestine terita. The capital of the first part under the Byzantines was Caesarea but its capital after the Muslim conquest was undecided until Ramla was built [30].

D. Goitein added : "Jerusalem never served, as an official capital of Falastīn (Samaria and Judaea) bore no negative connotations in those early years" [20]. In contrast, the Palestinian, Khalīl 'AthĀmina, in his study of the history and administration of Palestine, indulges in attempts to refute the claims made by the Israeli researchers in this regard. He attempts to prove that Jerusalem was the administrative capital of Palestine after the Islamic conquest. He argues that this continued to be the case until the capital was transferred to al-Ramla [17,31] 'AthĀmina depends on four main points in his discussion of the account narrated by YĀqût al- H. amawī in *Mu'jam al-BuldĀn* in which he indicated that Jerusalem was the administrative capital of Palestine [31]; 'Umar Ibn al-KhattĀb's appointment of 'Alqama Ibn Mujziz and 'UbĀda Ibn al-SĀmit as special governor and special judge for Jerusalem respectively [31]; the keenness of Mu'Āwiyya to stay in Jerusalem, the place where he took allegiance as caliph, for an extended period [31]; and the discovery of the palace, which goes back to the Umayyad period in the city [31]; all issues which have been previously examined.

What the researcher deducts from the claims of these modern researchers is that they come under the context of the present conflict over Jerusalem. The Israelis are doing their best to prove that Jerusalem was not important to the Muslims and they did not pay attention to it because they did not make it the capital of their state or even administrative capital of Palestine. On the other side the Palestinians particularly attempt, as in the case of 'AthĀmina, to prove that Jerusalem was the administrative capital of the region. Thus the two sides lack objective discussion on the matter. The argument between them becomes restricted to saying that, if Jerusalem was not a capital, then it was not important and vice versa. In other words, if it was the capital then it was important, as if the historical importance of a certain area is decided only according to whether it is the capital of its region or not.

In this regard, the modern researchers present different analyses for the reasons why the Muslims did not make Jerusalem the capital of their state or even the administrative capital of Palestine. These analyses can be described as ambiguous and inaccurate. They range between acknowledging that the Muslims paid attention

to Jerusalem and denying that they paid it attention. Once more, the argument goes back to whether it was the capital or not.

Although Khalīl 'AthĀmina confirmed that Jerusalem was the administrative capital of Palestine, 'Abd Al-'Azīz al-Dūrī totally ruled that out. The reason he gave was the unavailability of pastures in the region to meet the needs of the Muslim troops : "Bait al-Maqdis was not one of the administrative centres; since these centres were to be bases for the Arab *muqatila* (troops), to meet the need in pasture and climate and to be directly linked to the Arabian Peninsula; Bait al-Maqdis with its Haram was hardly suitable" [30].

This also contradicts the geographical sources' description of the Jerusalem region as being mountainous and covered with trees. M. Gil argues that the non-Muslim environment in Jerusalem was not comfortable for the Muslims. Their desire to take control of the coastal road and their awareness of the demographic unsuitability of al-Ludda as a capital prompted them to establish the city of al-Ramla. In this regard Gil stated that : "It seems that the genuinely non-Muslim surroundings were not congenial to the Muslims; on the other hand they undoubtedly, wished to dominate the roads and when they realised that Lod was also not suitable as capital of the region, again because of the non-Muslim population, it was decided to lay the foundation of (or develop) Ramla" [30].

Gil claims that the capital of Palestine prima under Muslim rule was undecided until al-Ramla was built. This means, according to his claim, that there was no administrative area for Palestine for 80 years. This results from his assumption that al-Ramla was built or developed during the era of SulayymĀn Ibn 'Abd al-Malik. However, this is in total contradiction with historical accounts such as al-Ya'qūbī's which mentions that al-Ludda, was the ancient capital [33] and al-Maqdisī, who mentions that 'ImwĀs was the capital of Palestine in olden times. However, in another account he states that al-Ramla was the ancient capital and even Jerusalem as 'Athamina claims quoting YĀqût [17,34].

D. Goitein held the opinion that : "In view of the lack of written sources on the subject, we cannot know why Jerusalem finally did not acquire this status (as capital). For then available means of transportation, Jerusalem was perhaps too far away from the main lines of international traffic" [19].

However, Karen Armstrong gives two reasons why the Muslims did not take Jerusalem as their capital. She argues : "Holy cities are seldom capital cities in the Islamic

world. There was no thought of making Makka the capital instead of Madinah in the early days, despite superior sanctity. But in the case of Jerusalem, it would clearly also have been difficult to make a city in which Muslims formed only a minority the capital of either a country or a province. And the Christian and the Jewish majority in Jerusalem was not the result of Muslim indifference to Jerusalem but of Muslim tolerance" [35].

Gil hesitantly acknowledges that the Arabs at first ran the affairs of the region from Jerusalem [30], then al-Ludda and finally al-Ramla. D. Goitein argues that the discovery of coins which bear the name Aelia Filastīn and go back to the period before 'Abd al-Malik's monetary reform lead to the presumption that Jerusalem was in fact the capital of the southern part of Palestine. He states : "Based on coinage pre-dating 'Abd al-Malik's monetary reform and engraved "Aelia Falastin" that is, Jerusalem of Filastin, it may be assumed that the city served for a time as capital of the southern part of the country". [19, 20].

The discovery of the architectural establishments in the walled city, may have prompted him to say: "The extensive foundation of the building laid bare to the south and south west of the al-Aqsa mosque during the recent excavation of B. Mazar (1968 –76) suggest that the Muslims planned to do in Palestine what they had done in Ifrikiya (Africa), Egypt and Syria etc. to replace the Byzantine capital situated on the seashore (Caesarea) with an inland administrative centre" [19].

Armstrong addresses the questions, which minimise the Muslims interest in Jerusalem because they did not make it their capital. She says : "It is often said that Muslims never bothered to make Jerusalem the capital of their empire or even the administrative capital of Palestine and that this is a sign of their fundamental indifference to the holy city. But this is not the case. In fact, it seems that the Umayyad caliphs did consider the possibility of making Jerusalem their capital instead of Damascus" [35].

However, these reasons do not appear to be sufficiently convincing and they need to be re-examined and analysed since the Muslims had no intention of making it their capital in the first place. First of all, Jerusalem is not that far from the main transportation routes. It is only some 50 km away from Gaza where these roads meet. Secondly, it is very close to the coastal region. Therefore, to say that the Muslims wanted to control the coast does not make it a condition that they should establish their capital there. The reverse is true; this is because a more secure city like Jerusalem would have been more suitable to be the capital than the coastal cities themselves. It is known that the Muslims usually

keep away from the border regions when it comes to establishing capitals and administrative cities, as in the case of Kûfa and Bas. ra in 'IrÃq for instance. The Muslims' desire to control the coast might have largely existed before they completed their conquests [15]. This is what prompted 'Umar Ibn al-KhattÃb to appoint 'Alqama Ibn H. akīm as governor in al-Ramla, then cancel the post after the end of the conquests. 'Umar did not even appoint any *Emīr* or *WÃlī* governor of Palestine to replace Yazīd Ibn Abī SufyÃn whom he appointed as general governor of Syria. Finally, with regard to the Muslims being a minority in Jerusalem or its surroundings being uncomfortable to them, it seems to the researcher that, what applies to Jerusalem undoubtedly applies to the other Syrian cities in the period that followed the Islamic conquest of the region. This is because the migration of the Arab tribes to Syria was very slow compared to what had happened in Iraq where the majority of the tribes migrated there for economic reasons. Despite this, the Muslims still made Damascus the location where the general governor of the region resided.

Al-Dûrī takes onboard the same thesis and holds the opinion that SulayymÃn Ibn 'Abd al-Malik thought of making Jerusalem his capital, but understandably abandoned the idea [32]. Al-Durī does not mention the sources upon which he depends in saying the above. Karen Armstrong depends on Mujīr al-Dīn, in saying the same thing. However, Mujīr al-Dīn is considered a very late source with regard to the Umayyad period since he died in 1404 AD / 706 AH. Furthermore, his account is an individual one with no strong transmission chain. Therefore, it is difficult to accept it as strong evidence. Despite this and although he stated that Jerusalem was not an administrative centre, Al-Dûrī acknowledges that the Muslims granted Jerusalem special significance. He argues that Jerusalem had its governor and judge, due to its special position [32].

As a result of examination of the arguments put forward by the modern researchers and comparison of their analyses to the historical and geographical accounts it seems to the researcher that their discussion of the Muslims' interest in Jerusalem is restricted to a certain area. The Muslims' interest in Jerusalem with regard to the administrative aspects is limited to the issue of whether Jerusalem was the administrative capital of Palestine or not. Moreover, these arguments contain hesitant and inadequate opinions. They concentrate on the attempts to deny or prove that Jerusalem was the administrative capital of Palestine. Some researchers even deny that

Jerusalem had received any attention from the Muslims. Others state that the architectural monuments recently discovered in Jerusalem somehow indicate that the Muslims might have thought about making it their capital and then changed their mind for some reason. These reasons differ from one researcher to another. What is more likely to be the case is that Jerusalem had never been the administrative capital of Palestine; and the Umayyads had absolutely no intention of making it their capital. Even if they had such an idea, then there were no convincing reasons to prevent them from carrying it out. The same thing applies to Khalīl 'AthÃmina who also depends on an individual account for his belief that Jerusalem was the administrative capital of Palestine.

It is worth mentioning in this regard that the Islamic historical and geographical sources did not use the word '*Ā s. ima* (capital) to denote the political or religious centre for the state or the residence of the caliph in the same manner as the modern use of that word. In addition, the word '*Ā s. ima* (capital) has never been mentioned in the books and lexicons of the Arabic language. The Arabic sources rather use terms such as *al-Madīna*, *al-Qasaba* and *al-Kûura* [36] to indicate the main cities in the different regions. However, this does not mean that each city to which one of these terms applies was the capital or administrative centre for its region. In other words, it doesn't necessarily mean that each city had its own administrative governor, judge, central mosque and governor's residence. These are in fact matters which are crucial to the administrative centres [17]. In the case of Palestine, for instance, it is noticed that the geographical sources mention a lot of names for Palestinian cities, which range between *Kûura* and *Qasaba*. The number of these cities reaches twenty-five according to al-Maqdisī, thirteen according to Ibn Khurduad. Āba, fifteen according to Ibn H. aûqal, eight according to Ibn Rusta and five according to al-Istakhrī, as indicated by Nicola ZiyyÃda [36]. Jerusalem, on the one hand, is counted as one of these cities. In other words, there was nothing to indicate that it was the administrative capital of the region. On the other hand, the existence of the elements of an administrative capital in Jerusalem such as the governor's residence, central mosque, governor and judge indicate the attention the Muslims paid to Jerusalem. They organised Jerusalem's internal affairs and gave it special status and privilege over many other Syrian cities, but didn't make it administrative centre for the region.

The researcher argues that the choice of capitals in the Islamic State was governed by many other conditions, differing from the ones mentioned by modern researchers.

Prophet Muhammad's choice of al-Madīna as capital came after a long time, i.e. after he presented Islam to the Arab tribes and the Aws and Khzraj tribes gave him their allegiance. In other words, the availability of supporters of Islam in Madīna was the crucial factor; and Madīna gained double strength as a result of the migration of large numbers of Muslims from Makka. Therefore, the very idea of moving the capital back to Makka was not on the agenda. The migration of large numbers of tribes to Iraq prompted the Muslims to build both Kûfa and Bas. ra to accommodate the tribe's men and *muqĀtila* (troops) there [16]. When these cities, particularly Kûfa, turned into magnificent centres of power in comparison to Madīna, 'Alī Ibn Abī T. Ālib was prompted to move the capital from Madīna to Kûfa in search of supporters as well [5,13,14,25]. In the case of Syria, the emigration of a large section of the inhabitants of Damascus and their settlement in the Roman controlled areas, played a crucial role in choosing it as capital as large numbers of empty houses were then available to accommodate the Muslims. Al-BalĀd. hurī narrated from Muhammad Ibn Sa'd, from al-WĀqidī that when the Muslims conquered Damascus, large numbers of its inhabitants moved out and reached Hercules in Antioch (AntĀkiyya). Therefore, large numbers of empty houses became available and thus the Muslims moved in [15]. In addition to this, the tribe of Kalb, who lived in the Damascus area in large numbers after the conquest, embraced Islam. Mu'Āwiyya firmly established his authority over Syria and married Mayysûn Bīnt Ba h. dal al-Kalbī, the daughter of Kalb's chief and the mother of his son, caliph Yazī d [24]. Thus the tribe of Kalb provided support for the Umayyads and a large military power to confront the parties which opposed them. In other words, this tribe played a central role in establishing Umayyad rule.

These conditions make it difficult to accept that the Muslims had thought about making Jerusalem their capital. Had they really intended to do so, from the first Islamic conquest until the end of the Rightly Guided Caliph's era, there was nothing which could have prevented them from making that goal reality. Even during the Umayyad period, when circumstances were totally different from the previous period, as a result of developments witnessed by the Muslim community, had the Umayyads decided to make Jerusalem a capital they could have done so despite the difficulties that they might have encountered. KamĀl S. S. alibī argues: "The Umayyads, it is true, paid attention to other Syrian towns, notably Jerusalem and Ramla in Palestine; they also established some new garrison towns here and there to control the outlying regions. Damascus, however, remained their favoured city" [37].

The question we should ask here is not whether the Muslims thought about making Jerusalem their capital and then abandoned the idea, but why they didn't think about making it their capital in the first place, as long as their capitals, whether in Madīna or Damascus, were largely convenient to the state. As far as al-Ludda is concerned, it is clear that it had been the administrative capital of Palestine before the transfer of the capital to al-Ramla. However, the Islamic sources do not provide us with sufficient information about when it became the administrative capital. It is more likely that the event took place after the era of the rightly Guided Caliphs and might even be after the era of Mu'Āwiyya Ibn Abī SufyĀn. This gives the impression that Palestine had not been a separate administrative unit after the Islamic conquest of the region; and that its affairs were run from Damascus for a long period of time. If we take this into account, then there doesn't seem to be any inaccuracies in the Islamic sources with regard to this issue. If there are still some inaccuracies, then this goes back to 'Umar Ibn al-KhattĀb's appointment of 'Alqama as governor of al-Ramla and then his cancellation of that post afterwards with Palestine's affairs consequently run from Damascus. Then al-Ludda was made administrative capital of Palestine and soon after the capital was transferred to al-Ramla after it was rebuilt and renovated. This created some inaccuracies in various historical accounts. Some of these accounts indicate that the capital was al-Ludda in view of its being the administrative centre of Palestine whereas other accounts indicate that the capital was al-Ramla.

The researcher argues that it is hard or even impossible for the Muslims to make Jerusalem (Bayt al-Maqdis) the administrative capital of historical Syria (BilĀd al-ShĀm), based on the fact that Jerusalem before and after the first Islamic conquest was considered a region and not just a mere city surrounded by walls. The question arises here how one could imagine that an area that extended from the boundaries of NĀblus area (S. art. aba) in the north to al-Kusayyfa in the south, as well as containing parts of the Dead Sea in the east, could function as an administrative capital.

On the other hand, there are many conditions which influenced the choice of capitals in the early Islamic period, none of them applying to the walled part of the Jerusalem area, as mentioned earlier.

The Muslim policy towards Jerusalem depended mainly on making it an open area for all the people, not only for the Muslims [38, 39]. In other words, the first Islamic conquest of Jerusalem made the area become an inclusive, not exclusive area, or as Karen Armstrong

argues; from the start the Muslims developed an inclusive vision of Jerusalem which did not deny the presence and devotion of others, but respected their rights and celebrated plurality and co-existence [35, 40].

CONCLUSION

The researcher can say that the Muslims did not think about making Jerusalem the capital of their state after the capital was transferred from HijĀz. They did not even think about making it the administrative centre for Palestine, neither immediately after it was conquered nor even during the Umayyad period. Despite this, the Muslims showed great interest in and paid a lot of attention to Jerusalem. They granted it special administrative and organisational privileges, which were normally characteristic of administrative capitals, such as the appointment of a judge, *Imam* and a teacher in addition to building the governor's residence there. They did not pay such attention to Palestine in general since it was not made a separate administrative unit and its affairs were run from Damascus. This is in agreement with the Muslim policy in dealing with BilĀd al-ShĀm as one administrative unit and did not separate it until the end of the 'UthmĀn State after the first world war when the boundaries of Palestine had been delineated after it was occupied and separated from BilĀd al-ShĀm (historical Syria). Moreover, the Umayyads, since Mu'Āwiyya established his rule over BilĀd al-ShĀm (historical Syria), were keen to stay in Bayt al-Maqdis for long periods. They also took allegiance as caliphs there. Mu'Āwiyya went even further than this and minted coins on which the name of Aelia was engraved, in an early period which was well before the process of Islamization of the coins in Islam. All these matters do indicate and confirm that the Muslims showed a great deal of interest in Jerusalem. This interest in Jerusalem started in the era of 'Umar Ibn al-KhattĀb and continued afterwards. This happened without any interference in the affairs of the non-Muslims who resided in Jerusalem and without changing its style and demography.

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